



U.S. DEPARTMENT of STATE

Poland

Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - [2003](#)

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Poland is a multiparty democracy with a bicameral parliament. Executive power is shared by the Prime Minister, the Council of Ministers, and, to a lesser extent, the President. Alexander Kwasniewski was reelected President in elections in 2000. The social democratic Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) formed a majority coalition government with the Union of Labor (UP) and the Polish Peasant Party (PSL) following parliamentary elections in 2001. The PSL withdrew from the coalition on March 1, leaving the SLD/UP in a minority coalition government. The judiciary is independent; however, it was inefficient.

Local police, a national office of investigation, and city guards (uniformed, unarmed officers) maintain internal security. The Minister of Interior oversees the internal security forces. The civilian Minister of Defense has command and control authority over the military chief of the general staff as well as oversight of military intelligence. Civilian authorities maintained effective control of the security forces. There were no reports that security forces committed human rights abuses.

The country was in transition from a centrally planned to a market economy and had a population of approximately 39 million. The primary sectors of the economy were manufactured goods, chemicals, machinery and equipment, and agricultural products.

The Government generally respected the human rights of its citizens; however, there were problems in some areas. Prison conditions remained generally poor. Lengthy pretrial detention occurred occasionally. The court system was hampered by a cumbersome legal process, poor administration, and an inadequate budget, and court decisions frequently were not implemented. The Government restricted the right to privacy, specifically through the use of wiretaps without judicial oversight. The Government maintained some restrictions in law and in practice on freedom of speech and of the press. There were incidents of desecration of graves in both Jewish and Catholic cemeteries, and anti-Semitic sentiments persisted. Women continued to experience serious discrimination in the labor market and were subject to various legal inequities. Child prostitution was a problem. There were reports of some societal discrimination and violence against ethnic minorities. Some employers violated worker rights, particularly in the growing private sector, and antiunion discrimination persisted. Trafficking in women and children was a problem.

RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Section 1 Respect for the Integrity of the Person Including Freedom From:

a. Arbitrary or Unlawful Deprivation of Life

There were no reports of the arbitrary or unlawful deprivation of life committed by the Government or its agents.

A civil case against Pomeranian police in connection with the 1998 beating death of 13-year-old Przemek Czaja in Slupsk remained pending at year's end.

The retrial of former Interior Minister Czeslaw Kiszczak for his role in the 1981 killings at the Wujek mine remained pending at year's end. In February, the appellate court annulled the verdict acquitting the riot police accused of killing the miners, opening the way for a new trial.

The Warsaw District Court trial of former Communist leader Jaruzelski and five others who allegedly ordered police to shoot workers during the 1970 riots in Gdansk remained pending at year's end.

b. Disappearance

There were no reports of politically motivated disappearances.

c. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

The law prohibits such practices, and there were no reports that government officials employed them.

The trial of four policemen for the 1997 beating of soccer fans in Gdynia remained pending at year's end.

Civil action against prison administrators in the 1996 case of a mentally retarded boy who was beaten and sodomized by inmates was dropped after the Supreme Court determined the boy had been wrongfully imprisoned and awarded his family approximately \$5,000 (20,000 PLN).

Prison conditions remained generally poor. Overcrowding, damp cells, and a lack of medical treatment were the chief problems. The prison system urgently needed additional funding. In September, the Government opened a new prison for 600 prisoners in Piotrkow Trybunalski. The Ombudsman for Human Rights continued to complain about the safety of prisoners, noting that inmates were often the victims of violent attacks by other prisoners and warders. The ratio of prisoners to rehabilitation officers was very poor. Women were held in 21 detention facilities, but only 5 were strictly for women; in 16 detention facilities, men and women were held separately. Minors (defined as 15- to 17-year-olds) sentenced for a crime were held separately from adults. Juveniles (17- to 21-year-olds) accused of serious crimes were usually sent to pretrial detention. They were not separated from adult detainees.

The Government permitted visits by independent human rights organizations. During the year, the Human Rights Ombudsmen monitored 20 detention facilities, and the Helsinki Foundation visited 7 detention centers; some visits were announced, while other visits were unannounced.

d. Arbitrary Arrest, Detention, or Exile

The Constitution prohibits arbitrary arrest and detention, and the Government generally observed these prohibitions. Courts rather than prosecutors issue arrest warrants.

The police force, consisting of 100,000 employees, is a national body with regional and municipal units. While the public generally regarded the police positively, low-level corruption within the police force was considered widespread. Instances of corruption and serious criminal misconduct were investigated by the National Police's office of internal affairs. The personnel division handled minor disciplinary offenses. There was also concern over the extent to which political pressure was brought to bear on the police. In October, national police commander Antoni Kowalczyk resigned after it was revealed that he had changed his testimony during the investigation into the "Starachowice affair," a corruption scandal in which senior government officials tipped off suspects of an impending raid by the national police's Central Bureau of Investigation. Two senior Interior Ministry officials also were disciplined for failing to prevent leaks of this data.

The law allows a 48-hour detention period before authorities are required to bring a defendant before a court and an additional 24 hours for the court to decide whether to issue a pretrial detention order. During this period, access to a lawyer normally is limited. Once a prosecutor presents the legal basis for a formal investigation, the law provides for access to counsel. Bail was available, and most detainees were released on bail pending trial.

Detainees may be held in pretrial detention for up to 3 months and may challenge the legality of an arrest by appeal to the district court. A court may extend the pretrial detention period every 3 months for up to 18 months until the trial. Total detention time before the court issues a first sentence may not exceed 2 years. Under certain circumstances, the Supreme Court may extend the 2-year period.

The Constitution prohibits forced exile, and the Government did not employ it.

e. Denial of Fair Public Trial

The Constitution provides for an independent judiciary, and the Government generally respected this provision in practice; however, the judiciary remained inefficient and lacked resources and public confidence.

There is a four-tiered court and prosecutorial structure. The courts consist of regional, provincial, and appellate divisions, as well as a Supreme Court. These tiers are subdivided further into five parts: Military, civil, criminal, labor, and family. Regional courts try original cases, while appellate courts are charged solely with appeals. Provincial courts have a dual responsibility, handling appeals from regional courts while enjoying original jurisdiction for the most serious types of offenses. Appellate courts handle appeals tried at the provincial level; the Supreme Court only handles appeals about questions of law. The prosecutorial system mirrors the court structure with national, provincial, appellate, and regional offices. Criminal cases are tried in regional and provincial courts by a panel consisting of a professional judge and two lay assessors. The seriousness of the offense determines which court has original jurisdiction.

Judges are nominated by the National Judicial Council and appointed by the President. They are appointed for life, guaranteed complete immunity from prosecution, and can be reassigned but not dismissed, except by a court decision. The Constitutional Tribunal rules on the constitutionality of legislation. Constitutional Tribunal decisions are final and binding.

The court system remained cumbersome, poorly administered, inadequately staffed, and underfunded. The courts had numerous inefficiencies--most notably, many districts had more criminal judges than prosecutors--that contributed to a lack of public confidence. Many effective judges and prosecutors left public service for the more lucrative private sector. Court decisions frequently were not implemented. Bailiffs normally ensured the execution of civil verdicts such as damage payments and evictions; however, they were underpaid, subject to intimidation and bribery, and had a mixed record on implementing decisions. Civil and administrative rulings against public institutions such as hospitals often could not be enforced due to a lack of funds. In 2002, there were over 2 million cases pending from years prior to 2001. Simple civil cases can take as long as 2 to 3 years to resolve, and the pretrial waiting time in criminal cases could be several months. The backlog and the cost of legal action appeared to deter many citizens from using the justice system, particularly in civil matters such as divorce. The long wait for routine court decisions in commercial matters was an incentive for bribery and corruption.

The Government has introduced measures to alleviate the backlog of cases within the courts. According to the Council of Europe, the Ministry of Justice utilized budget increases to hire over 200 judicial assistants, enacted procedural changes to simplify and accelerate court proceedings, and extended judicial staff work hours in order to expedite processing of cases.

Defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty. At the end of a trial, the court renders its decision orally and then has 7 days to prepare a written decision. A defendant has the right to appeal within 14 days of the written decision. Appeals may be made on the basis of new evidence or procedural irregularities.

Once charges are filed, a defendant is allowed to consult an attorney, who is provided at public expense if necessary. Once the defendant is prepared, a trial date is set. Defendants must be present during trial and may present evidence and confront witnesses in their defense. Prosecutors can grant witnesses anonymity if they express fear of retribution from the defendant. This law, designed to help combat organized crime, impairs defendants' right to confront their accusers. Trials are usually public; however, the courts reserve the right to close a trial to the public in some circumstances, such as divorce cases, trials in which state secrets may be disclosed, or cases whose content might offend public morality (see Section 1.f.). The courts rarely invoked this right. A two-level appeal process is available in most civil and criminal matters.

The law allows a defendant and a representative, in addition to the prosecutor, to be present for a provincial appellate court's examination of a verdict.

There were no reports of political prisoners.

The Government has not established a program for restitution or compensation for private property seized during the Communist or Nazi eras. The Treasury has estimated that there were 56,000 claims outstanding for property valued at approximately \$12.5 billion (50 billion PLN). During the year, the Government held internal discussions regarding the possible form of restitution legislation. Despite the lack of a national law, some property nationalized illegally has been restituted and compensation given. The Ministry of Economy has returned approximately 1,600 properties (mostly mills, factories, and sawmills) with an estimated total value of approximately \$350 million (1.4 billion PLN). In addition, it has paid compensation of nearly \$50 million (200 million PLN) to former owners whose property could not be given back. The City of Warsaw has returned ownership of buildings and given an 80-year

lease on land in approximately 1,000 cases.

f. Arbitrary Interference with Privacy, Family, Home, or Correspondence

The Constitution prohibits such actions; however, the Government did not always respect these prohibitions in practice. The Constitution provides for the general right to privacy; however, there is no legislation that provides for this right.

The law prohibits arbitrary forced entry into homes, and search warrants issued by a prosecutor are required to enter private residences. In emergency cases, when a prosecutor is not immediately available, police may enter a residence with the approval of the local police commander. In the most urgent cases, police may enter a private residence after showing their official identification if there is no time to consult the police commander. There were no reports that police abused search warrant procedures.

The law prohibits the collection of information about a person's ethnic origin, religious convictions, health, political views, or membership in religious, political, or trade union organizations. However, the law allows that personal data may be released if necessary to carry out the statutory objectives of churches and other religious unions, associations, foundations, and other non-profit-seeking organizations or institutions with a political, scientific, religious, philosophical, or trade-union aim. Other exceptions include provision of information necessary for medical treatment, the establishment of legal claims, and scientific research, so long as the results are not published. All exceptions are subject to some restrictions. In practice, some private organizations have persisted in asking for information such as nationality in questionnaires; although violators are subject to prosecution, there were no known cases during the year.

The Government maintained a large number of wiretaps without judicial review or oversight. The law permits police and intelligence services to monitor private correspondence and to use wiretaps and electronic monitoring devices in cases involving serious crimes, narcotics, money laundering, or illegal firearm sales. Under the Criminal Code, the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Interior must authorize these investigative methods. In emergency cases, the police may initiate wiretaps or open private correspondence at the same time that they are seeking authorization. There were no credible estimates on the number of police wiretaps.

Parliamentarians and human rights groups expressed concern about the lack of control over wiretaps. There was no independent judicial review of surveillance activities, nor was there any control over how the information derived from them was used. A number of agencies had access to wiretap information, and the Police Code allows electronic surveillance to be used for the prevention of crime as well as for investigations.

Under the law on "lustration," designed to expose officials who collaborated with the Communist-era secret police, persons caught lying about their past may be prohibited from holding public office for 10 years. The law requires officials to provide sworn affidavits concerning their cooperation with the secret police; the public interest spokesman (lustration prosecutor) verifies the affidavits and brings cases of misrepresentation before the lustration court, a special 3-judge panel whose decisions may be appealed. In February, legislation was enacted exempting persons who cooperated with intelligence and counterintelligence agencies from this process. In June, the Constitutional Tribunal found the legislation to be unconstitutional on procedural grounds. In October, a new law was enacted with many of the same provisions as the earlier legislation.

In November, the Supreme Court returned the case of a Deputy Defense Minister who was judged to have lied in his affidavit to the appellate court, and the appellate court upheld its earlier ruling. Many similar cases were closed to the public because they involved classified documents (see Section 1.e.). Critics continued to voice concern that the vetting procedure may be unfair because secret police records were subject to loss or tampering.

Men are not permitted to marry without parental permission until the age of 21, whereas women may marry at the age of 18 (see Section 5).

Section 2 Respect for Civil Liberties, Including:

a. Freedom of Speech and Press

The Constitution provides for freedom of speech and of the press, and the Government generally respected these rights and provided for academic freedom; however, there were a few restrictions in law and practice. The Criminal Code states that an individual who "publicly insults or humiliates a constitutional institution" of the country is subject

to a fine or imprisonment of up to 2 years, while an individual who insults a public functionary is subject to a fine or imprisonment of up to 1 year. Individual citizens and businesses may also use the Criminal Code to protect their good name.

There is no restriction on the establishment of private newspapers or distribution of journals, and there were numerous private newspapers and magazines representing a wide variety of viewpoints.

The National Radio and Television Broadcasting Council (KRRiTV) has broad power to monitor and regulate programming on radio and television, allocate broadcasting frequencies and licenses, and apportion subscription revenues to public media. Council members are legally required to suspend their membership in political parties or public associations.

The Government owns the most widely viewed television channel and 17 regional stations. Center-right politicians, watchdog institutions, and commentators accused public television of being influenced by politicians from the ruling SLD and PSL parties, whose members also have majority seats in supervisory and management boards in public television and radio.

Private television, including satellite and cable services, was available across most of the country. Private television broadcasters operated on frequencies selected by the Ministry of Communications and auctioned by the KRRiTV. Polish Television (TVP) (two channels) was the most widely viewed television, with a 46 percent market share, but had strong competition from the private TVN and Polsat networks. Catholic TV, which presented a conservative point of view, went off the air in March. Cable television and various satellite services carried the main national channels, as well as local, regional, and foreign stations, to viewers throughout the country.

The Government owned 5 national radio networks. Private radio flourished on the local, regional, and national levels alongside public radio. Companies with shares in nationwide dailies expanded networks with local radio stations. To cut costs, small local radio stations set up several networks to facilitate advertising and programming.

The law allows for the prosecution of citizens who publish or otherwise betray state secrets.

The law provides for the protection of journalistic sources, except in cases involving national security, murder, and terrorist acts.

The law stipulates that programs should not promote activities that are illegal or against state policy, morality, or the common good and requires that all broadcasts "respect the religious feelings of the audiences and, in particular, respect the Christian system of values." The law also requires public television to provide direct media access to the main state institutions, including the presidency, to make presentations or explanations of public policy. Both public and private radio and television stations provided coverage of all ranges of political opinion.

In May, the newspaper *Zycie* appealed a Warsaw district court ruling ordering it to apologize to President Kwasniewski for publishing untrue information. The case remained pending at year's end.

In February, the Warsaw Prosecutor's Office filed charges against journalist Jerzy Urban for his article in *Nie*, which criticized the Pope for senility and made other derogatory remarks shortly before the 2002 Papal visit to Poland.

Books expressing a wide range of political and social viewpoints were widely available, as were periodicals and other publications from abroad.

Offending religious sentiment through public speech is punishable by a fine or a 3-year prison term. In July, artist Dorota Nieznalska was fined and sentenced to 6 months parole and 120 hours of community service for displaying her artistic collection, which included a picture of male genitalia attached to a cross, in Gdansk.

The Internet was widely available and was not regulated or restricted. The Government did not restrict academic freedom.

b. Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association

The law provides for freedom of assembly and association, and the Government generally respected these rights in practice.

Permits are not necessary for public meetings but are required for public demonstrations; demonstration organizers must obtain permits from local authorities if a demonstration might block a public road. Organizers also are required to inform the local police of the time and place of large demonstrations and their planned route. Every gathering must have a chairperson who is required to open the demonstration, preside over it, and close it. Authorities issued permits for public gatherings on a routine basis.

Private associations need government approval to organize and must register with their district court. The procedure essentially requires the organization to sign a declaration committing them to abide by the law. In practice, the procedure is complicated and may be subject to the discretion of the judge in charge.

c. Freedom of Religion

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respected this right in practice.

There are 15 religious groups whose relationship with the State is governed by specific legislation that outlines the internal structure of the religious groups, their activities, and procedures for property restitution, plus 139 other religious communities. Religious communities may register with the Government; however, they are not required to do so and may function freely without registration. All churches and recognized religious groups share the same privileges, such as duty-free importation of office equipment and reduced taxes.

Although the Constitution provides for the separation of church and state, crucifixes hang in both the upper and lower houses of Parliament, as well as in many government offices. State-run radio broadcast Catholic mass on Sundays, and the Catholic Church was authorized to relicense radio and television stations to operate on frequencies assigned to the Church, the only body outside the National Radio and Television Council allowed to do so.

The law provides that offending religious sentiment through public speech is punishable by fine or prison term (see Section 2.a.).

Although the Constitution gives parents the right to bring up their children in accordance with their religious and philosophical beliefs, religious education classes continued to be taught in public schools. While children are supposed to have the choice between religious and ethics instruction, the Ombudsman's office stated that, in most schools, ethics courses were not offered due to financial constraints. The Government employed Catholic Church representatives to teach religious classes in the schools. Such classes constituted the vast majority of all religious education, since the population was approximately 95 percent Catholic. However, parents could request religious classes in any registered religion, including Protestant, Orthodox, and Jewish religions. Non-Catholic religious instruction existed but was not common. The Ministry of Education paid instructors, including priests, for teaching religion classes. In addition, Catholic Church representatives were included on a commission that determined which books qualified for school use.

The laws governing restitution of communal property allow for the return of churches and synagogues, cemeteries, and community headquarters, as well as buildings that were used for other religious, educational, or charitable activities. Of approximately 10,000 communal property claims filed, nearly 4,000 have been resolved, and over 1,000 properties have been returned.

Relations between various religious communities were generally amicable; however, sporadic incidents of harassment and violence against Jews and occasional desecration of Jewish and, more often, Catholic cemeteries continued, mostly by skinheads and other marginal elements of society. On January 22, 37 tombstones and several crosses were knocked down and destroyed at a parish cemetery in Swietochlowice. On April 22, 23 tombstones were destroyed in a memorial Jewish cemetery in Legnica, the site of similar destruction in 2002. Authorities found no indication of any sect or cult activity in either case and labeled them acts of vandalism.

There were no developments by year's end in the 2002 cases of desecration of tombstones in Czeladz and in a Jewish cemetery in Wroclaw.

The investigation by Katowice authorities into the 2001 anti-Semitic, anti-European Union (EU) demonstration by approximately 400 Polish ultra nationalists remained pending at year's end.

The National Memory Institute published a white paper and discontinued its investigation of the Jedwabne massacre after concluding that beyond those persons already brought to trial, there were no other living persons

against whom charges could be filed.

There is some public concern about the growth of groups perceived to be "sects" and the influence of non-mainstream religious groups. According to the National Sect Protection Committee, a private monitoring group, more citizens were joining such groups.

For a more detailed discussion, see the [2003 International Religious Freedom Report](#).

d. Freedom of Movement Within the Country, Foreign Travel, Emigration, and Repatriation

The Constitution provides for these rights, and the Government generally respected them in practice.

The law provides for the granting of refugee and asylee status to persons who meet the definition of the 1951 U.N. Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. In practice, the Government provided protection against refoulement and granted asylum and refugee status. Persons recognized as refugees under the Convention are granted permission to remain in the country permanently. The Government cooperated with the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other humanitarian organizations in assisting refugees. In 2002, the Government received 5,158 petitions for refugee status, of which 258 were approved. During the year, the Government received 7,748 petitions, of which 219 were approved.

The law provides all prospective refugees access to a procedure for adjudicating refugee status. Prospective refugees may appeal negative status decisions by the Ministry of Internal Affairs to an independent board. The Bureau of Repatriation and Aliens (BRA) controlled the various refugee centers and agencies and had some political control over the border guards.

The BRA has 6 months in which to render a decision on an application for refugee status. An alien may appeal the denial of a petition to the BRA's refugee board within 2 weeks of delivery of the initial decision. If the board finds a claim to be "manifestly unfounded," the alien may file an appeal within three days of the initial finding. The BRA refugee board's decisions may be appealed in the country's administrative courts. While the law calls for a decision granting or denying asylum to be rendered within 6 months from the date of the initiation of the procedure, the average application processing time was 8 months, with some cases taking as long as 18 months. The length of processing time left applicants living in legal limbo, unable to work legally, while awaiting decisions on their cases. Approximately 3 percent of all applicants were granted refugee status. A slightly higher percentage of Chechens (3.4 percent) received refugee status.

In September, the country adopted a new Aliens Protection Law. The law includes provisions relating to refugee status determination, provides for the protection for unaccompanied minors and children, and also addresses asylum issues.

According to a September UNHCR report, there was a significant increase during the year in the number of persons abandoning the procedure for securing refugee status or leaving refugee centers. Between April 14 and June 6, 1,112 Chechens applied for the discontinuation of the refugee determination procedure and subsequently sought refugee status in the Czech Republic. UNHCR also expressed concern over the number of refugees leaving the country because of difficulties integrating into society.

Unlike in previous years, there were no reports of harassment of refugee camp inhabitants by local residents or mistreatment of refugees by police.

During the year, the BRA provided extensive training for its personnel. Staff responsible for conducting interviews and refugee center staff received training on issues related to unaccompanied minors and the new "tolerated status" provisions of the Aliens Protection Law. UNHCR provided training for judges at the Supreme Administrative Court adjudicating asylum cases.

Section 3 Respect for Political Rights: The Right of Citizens to Change Their Government

The Constitution provides citizens with the right to change their government peacefully, and citizens exercised this right in practice through periodic, free, and fair elections held on the basis of universal suffrage. Citizens 18 years of age and older have the right to vote and to cast secret ballots, and voting is voluntary. Multiple candidates from various political parties participated in the elections and had access to the media. Reform of the country's political and economic structure led to an invitation in 2002 to join the EU in May 2004.

The most recent national elections took place in 2001. Average voter turnout for these parliamentary elections was 46.3 percent. The elections were regarded as free and fair. Only minor irregularities (e.g., registering of hospital patients, ballot boxes too small to hold the number of ballots cast) were reported.

There were no restrictions on the participation of women in politics or government. There were 95 women among 460 members of the Sejm and 23 women among the 100 members of the Senate. There was one woman in the 16-member Cabinet.

There were two members of the German minority party in the Parliament. The electoral law exempts ethnic minority parties from the requirement that they win 5 percent of the vote nationwide to qualify for seats in individual districts.

Section 4 Governmental Attitude Regarding International and Nongovernmental Investigation of Alleged Violations of Human Rights

A number of domestic and international human rights groups generally operated without government restriction, investigating and publishing their findings on human rights cases.

Section 5 Discrimination Based on Race, Sex, Disability, Language, or Social Status

The Constitution states that "no one shall be discriminated against in political, social, or economic life for any reason whatsoever," and the Government attempted to ensure that these provisions are observed; however, violence and societal discrimination against women and ethnic minorities persisted.

Women

Violence against women continued to be a problem. In a 2002 public opinion poll, 12 percent of women stated that they had been victims of domestic violence, while 7 percent stated that they had been beaten on multiple occasions. Additionally, 43 percent of respondents stated that they knew at least one woman who was physically abused by her husband. Police statistics indicated that approximately 74,000 women were victims of domestic violence in 2002. Women's organizations asserted that the number of women suffering from domestic abuse is probably much higher because battered women usually refused to admit abuse even to themselves. Violence against women remained hidden, particularly in small towns and villages. Physical abuse is illegal and spousal rape is treated in the same manner as other types of rape.

Police intervened in cases of domestic violence. The police, in cooperation with the State Agency for Solving Alcoholic Problems, use the "blue card," a record-keeping system designed to document incidents of spousal abuse. However, the program had limited effect due to inadequate funding. Sentences for abuse of family members range from 3 months to 5 years, or from 2 to 10 years if the victim attempts suicide as a result of the abuse. Most convictions resulted in suspended sentences. A police spokesman stated that there were 23,921 cases of family abuse reported in 2002, of which 213 involved particularly severe abuse. According to NGOs, courts often treated domestic violence as a minor crime, pronouncing lenient verdicts or dismissing cases.

In 2002, 2,345 rape cases were reported. However, women often were unwilling to report the crime and NGOs estimated that the actual number was 10 times higher than reported.

The Government had a vice-ministerial level Plenipotentiary for the Equal Rights of Women and Men. During the year, the Plenipotentiary focused on development of a National Program for Women, which the Government approved in August, and the introduction of new anti-discrimination provisions into the labor code. Parliament passed the revised labor code, which was signed by the President in December. In addition, NGOs operated 15 centers to assist victims, provide preventive treatment and counseling to perpetrators, and train personnel working with domestic violence victims. The Office of Victims' Rights Spokesman at the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration was responsible for ensuring that violence victims were treated with respect by law enforcement and the judicial system. The office provided legal and psychological assistance for victims and their families.

The law does not provide for restraining orders to protect battered women against further abuse. In divorce cases, courts frequently granted a divorce without issuing a property settlement, forcing women to return to abusive husbands. This problem was exacerbated by a lack of alternative housing. Women's advocacy groups also complained there were a small number of state-supported shelters for battered women.

Prostitution is legal; however, pimping or paying for sexual activity is illegal. Due to a crackdown on prostitutes who

work along major thoroughfares and at truck stops, much of the prostitution industry moved to brothels, massage parlors, or agencies offering escort services. Police estimated that there were 7,000 prostitutes in the country of whom 3,000 worked in one of the 700 agencies in operation and 3,400 worked in hotels, pubs, discos, and on the streets. The remaining 600 prostitutes worked on major thoroughfares and at truck stops.

Trafficking in women for the purpose of sexual exploitation was a problem (see Sections 6.f.).

While there are no laws specifically addressing sexual harassment, social awareness of the problem continued to increase, and there are mechanisms available to deal with the problem. For example, the Criminal Code states that whoever takes advantage of a position of power in a relationship to gain sexual gratification may be sentenced to up to 3 years in prison. According to a Supreme Court advisory opinion, such a relationship can occur between employers and employees, supervisors and subordinates, or teachers and students; however, this provision can be invoked only when alleged sexual harassment occurs between a supervisor and an individual in a subordinate position.

The Constitution provides for equal rights regardless of gender and grants women equal rights with men in all areas of family, political, social, and economic life, including equal compensation for work of similar value. However, in practice women frequently were paid less for equivalent work, mainly held lower level positions, were fired more readily, and were less likely to be promoted than men. The 2003 government statistical bulletin indicated that men had a higher employment rate (50.7 percent) than women (38.1 percent) and that women had a higher unemployment rate. In July, 51.2 percent of those unemployed were women, despite the fact that they comprised a smaller share of the population actively seeking work. Despite having a generally higher level of education, women earned on average 30 percent less than men. The labor code prohibits discrimination in hiring, and the employer has the burden of proof to show that discrimination did not occur. Women are prohibited from working underground or in jobs that require heavy lifting. Apart from the Constitution, there are no laws that provide equal rights for women.

Women were employed in a wide variety of professions and occupations, and a number held high positions in government and the private sector. In agriculture, women comprised 20 percent of all principal managers of farms. Men and women had the right to take time off to care for a sick child. The pension law requires earlier retirement for women (age 60) than for men (age 65), with the result that women received approximately 60 percent of the average pension received by men. However, women may appeal forced retirement at age 60 to the labor court.

On January 14, the Sejm passed a National Development Plan that included programs to promote the equalization of women with men in all areas of work, society, and politics.

The Ombudsman for Human Rights monitored women's rights within the broader context of human rights; however, the broad scope of the office's mandate diluted its ability to function as an effective advocate of women's issues. There are several women's rights NGOs, including the Polish Foundation for Women and Family Planning and the Women's Rights Center, that were active advocates of gender equality and advanced their goals through research, monitoring, and publishing. There were also several church-sponsored women's advocacy organizations, but their cooperation with other women's NGOs was limited.

Children

The Constitution extends some state protection to the family and children, and there is a Sejm-appointed Ombudsman for Children's Rights.

The Ombudsman--mandated to protect children from violence, cruelty, neglect, and other mistreatment--is the official point of contact for complaints about violations of human rights of children and submits requests to the appropriate law enforcement or other authorities for action. The Ombudsman submits an annual report to the Sejm on the children's rights situation and may suggest legislation to improve the human rights situation of children.

Education is universal and mandatory until age 18, and public schools are free. The Government sponsored some health programs targeted specifically at children, including a vaccination program and periodic checkups conducted in the schools; however, budget shortfalls prevented complete implementation of these programs.

Although child abuse occurred, there was no societal pattern of abuse. The law prohibits violence against children, and anyone who physically or psychologically abuses a juvenile may receive a prison sentence of 3 months to 5 years. The sentence is increased if the victim attempts suicide or the perpetrator acted with extreme cruelty. However, abuse was rarely reported, and convictions also were rare. Schools did not have procedures to protect

children from abuse by teachers, and the teachers' work code provides legal immunity from prosecution for corporal punishment in the classroom.

Trafficking in children, primarily for the purpose of sexual exploitation, was a problem (see Section 6.f.). The law prohibits child prostitution; anyone who, with the purpose of obtaining a material benefit, incites a minor to prostitution or facilitates such prostitution is subject to a sentence from 1 to 10 year's imprisonment.

Men and women reach majority at the age of 18; however, a woman can reach majority at the age of 16 if she has entered into marriage with the consent of her parents and the guardianship court. Men are not permitted to marry without parental consent until the age of 21, whereas women may do so at the age of 18 (see Section 1.f.).

Persons with Disabilities

There was no discrimination against persons with disabilities in employment, education, or in the provision of other state services. There were approximately 5.5 million persons with disabilities in the country by year's end. In 2002, approximately 20 percent of persons with disabilities but able to work were unemployed, slightly higher than the national unemployment rate. Advocacy groups claimed that the rate was much higher. The law allows individuals from certain disability groups to work without losing their disability benefits. Approximately 46 percent of the persons with disabilities had no more than an elementary education, compared with 32 percent of those without disabilities, and only 4 percent had a university education, compared with 9 percent of persons without disabilities.

The law mandates access to buildings for persons with disabilities; however, public buildings and transportation generally are not accessible to persons with disabilities. Implementation falls short of rights set forth in the legislation since the law provides only that buildings "should be accessible."

There were reports of some societal discrimination against persons with disabilities.

National/Racial/Ethnic Minorities

There were occasional incidents of skinheads clashing with Roma and racially motivated violence directed at Roma. There were no developments in the 2001 case in which three suspects were arrested for vandalizing automobiles and other Romani vehicles at a resort camp.

Individuals of African, Asian, or Arab descent also reported isolated incidents of verbal, physical and other types of abuse. In 2002, two Polish men in Krakow shouted racial slurs and assaulted two foreigners of African descent; legal proceedings in the case were ongoing at year's end.

Instances of violence against Muslims were also reported. In Warsaw and Wroclaw, a number of Arabic restaurants were attacked; in Lodz a group of skinheads picketed a student residence and beat up an Arab student; and in Gdansk windows were shattered in a mosque.

Societal discrimination against Roma, who have been considered a national minority since 1998, was commonplace, and some local officials discriminated against Roma in the provision of social services. According to its leaders, the 30,000 Roma in the country faced disproportionately high unemployment and were hit harder by economic changes and restructuring than were ethnic Poles. Romani leaders complained of widespread discrimination in employment, housing, banking, the justice system, the media, and education.

The small Ukrainian and Belarusian minorities occasionally experienced petty harassment and discrimination.

The Open Republic Association reported that the greatest number of racist publications were anti-Semitic, anti-Ukrainian, and anti-German, with fewer anti-Roma and anti-Catholic publications.

There were a number of steps taken to improve the treatment of minority groups. In March, 3,500 students, journalists, and politicians joined in the fourth annual "Color Tolerance" day, removing vulgar and racist slogans directed against various ethnic and racial minorities from walls in the city of Lodz.

The Government continued to cooperate with local governments to develop and finance programs to assist the poorest Roma. Some local governments became more active in dealing with the problems of local Romani communities. During the year, the Government spent approximately \$770,000 (3 million PLN) on a pilot project to help the Romani community in Malopolska Province to increase the number of students completing high school,

reduce unemployment, and improve health care and safety by providing books, training staff liaisons to the Romani community, and improving the educational and residential infrastructure in Romani communities. The school enrollment rate among Roma children has increased from 30 percent to 80 percent and a number of new homes are being built for Romani residents.

The law provides for the educational rights of ethnic minorities, including the right to be taught in their own language. There were an estimated 50,000 Lithuanians in the country, and Lithuanian minority rights, including language instruction, were addressed routinely during governmental talks. There were 31 Lithuanian-language textbooks in use during the year at different education levels, including textbooks on mathematics, physics and geography financed by the Government.

The German minority in Opole Province makes up one-third of the area's 1 million inhabitants. Some community members continued to complain of inadequate use of German in the province's schools. In 2001, the Government rejected the application by a 170,000-member Silesian community for official minority status. The Association of People of Silesian Nationality (ZLNS), which claimed a heritage distinct from that of both the Polish majority and German minority populations in the region, took the matter to the European Court for Human Rights (ECHR). In December 2001, the Court found that the Government had not violated freedom of association provisions and upheld the prior decision to deny official minority status. At the request of the ZLNS, the case was referred to the ECHR's Grand Chamber. The Grand Chamber heard arguments on the case in July, but had not issued a ruling by the end of the year.

Section 6 Worker Rights

a. The Right of Association

The law provides that all workers, including civilian employees of the armed forces, police, and frontier guards, have the right to establish and join trade unions of their choosing, and workers exercised these rights. The law sets minimum size requirements for establishing a trade union: 10 persons may form a local union, and 30 may establish a national union. Unions, including interbranch national unions and national interbranch federations, must be registered with the courts. A court decision refusing registration may be taken to an appeals court. The law does not give trade unions the freedom to exercise their right to organize all workers. For example, workers on individual contracts cannot form or join a trade union. In state-owned enterprises, such as the health sector, water, and forestry, there were cases in which workers had their normal employment contract terminated and replaced by an individual contract that took away rights they formerly enjoyed as permanent employees.

There were approximately 360 registered national-level unions. There is no precise data on work force unionization; according to press reports, 14 percent of the workforce were union members.

As a rule, newly established small- and medium-sized firms were nonunion, while union activity in most cases carried over into privatized (former state-owned) enterprises. The Independent Self-Governing Trade Union (NSZZ) Solidarity had nearly 1 million members. Small spin-offs from mainstream Solidarity include the rival factions Solidarity '80, August '80, and the Christian Trade Union Solidarity.

The other principal national unions are those affiliated with the All-Poland Trade Union Alliance (OPZZ) and its affiliate, the Polish Union of Teachers. The OPZZ claimed approximately 1.3 million members, of whom 870,000 were employed; independent surveys suggested that its dues-paying membership was considerably smaller than Solidarity's.

The law prohibits antiunion discrimination; however, labor leaders reported that employers discriminated against workers who attempted to organize or join unions, particularly in the growing private sector. The law also did not prevent employer harassment of union members for trade union activity; there were unconfirmed reports that some employers sanctioned employees who tried to set up unions.

Unions have the right by law to join labor federations and confederations and to affiliate with international labor organizations. Independent labor leaders reported that these rights were observed in practice. Solidarity is a full member of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, the World Confederation of Labor, and the European Trade Union Confederation.

b. The Right to Organize and Bargain Collectively

The law provides for and protects enterprise-level collective bargaining over wages and working conditions. The Tripartite Commission (unions, employers, and the Government), chaired by the Minister of Economy, Labor and Social Policy Jerzy Hausner, was the main forum that determined national-level wage and benefit increases in sensitive areas, such as the so-called budget sector (health, education, and public employees). The Commission served as an important forum for the social partners to discuss differences and grievances and often to negotiate agreements before problems erupted into conflict.

The law does not require verification of union membership in order for unions to be considered "representative" negotiating partners for management and government. Solidarity protested some unions' (largely OPZZ affiliates) participation in negotiations with the Government on the ground that their membership figures were unsubstantiated.

Many disputes arose because of the weakness of the employer side of the union/employer/government triangle. Key state sector employers (largely in heavy industry and the budget sector) remained unable to negotiate with labor without the extensive involvement of the ministries to which they are subordinate, thereby complicating and politicizing the Government's labor relations.

The law provides for parties to take disputes first to labor courts, then to the prosecutor general, and, as a last resort, to the Supreme Court. In a typical year, Solidarity takes several thousand cases to labor courts, several hundred to the prosecutor general, and dozens to the Supreme Court for resolution. In an overwhelming majority of these cases, the courts ordered employers to correct practices or reinstate dismissed workers, or ordered unions to reimburse employers for activity found to be illegal. However, penalties were minimal and were not an effective deterrent.

Unions have the right to strike except in "essential services"--uniformed services, state administration, and local government--where they only have the right to protest. A majority of strikes were technically illegal because one or both of the sides did not follow each step exactly as required by law. Labor courts acted slowly on deciding the legality of strikes, while sanctions against unions for calling illegal strikes, or against employers for provoking them, were minimal. Arbitration is not obligatory and depends on the agreement of disputing parties. Unions alleged that laws prohibiting retribution against strikers were not enforced consistently and that fines imposed as punishment were so minimal that they were ineffective deterrents to illegal activity. Workers who strike in accordance with the law retain their right to social insurance but not to pay. However, if a court rules a strike illegal, workers may lose social benefits, and organizers are liable for damages and may face civil charges and fines. The social partners (unions, employers, and government) continued to work out ambiguities in dispute resolution mechanisms provided for in the Labor Code.

On August 16, striking employees occupied the Wagony S.A. rail car plant in Ostrow Wielkopolski to protest wage arrears. The strike ended September 2 following partial payment of back wages. In August, workers at the Tonsil electronics plant struck to protest lack of payment and steel workers occupied the county offices in Stalowa Wola. Unionists from the Odratrans barge company blocked boat traffic on the Oder River in Szczecin and Wroclaw on September 2 to protest proposed changes to the company's supervisory board.

On September 2, approximately 10,000 Silesian miners protested mine closings in Katowice. On September 11, a similar number took part in a Warsaw march, which saw violent clashes with police and destruction of property.

In November, the Solidarity trade union organized a "Days of Protest" campaign against the Government's social policies. The campaign included protests by coal miners in Silesia and healthcare workers in Warsaw and a demonstration by persons with disabilities and pensioners in front of Parliament. The campaign ended on November 26 with an estimated 5,000 persons taking part in over 50 actions across the country.

In response to 2002 labor disturbances at the Ozarow Cable Factory, the Council of Ministers and Telefonika Cable's Industry Development Agency agreed to set up an economic zone in the Ozarow area. There was no activity on this project through the end of the year.

There are no export processing zones.

c. Prohibition of Forced or Bonded Labor

The law prohibits forced or bonded labor, including by children; however, there were reports of child labor and trafficking in adults and children for labor (see Sections 6.d. and 6.f.).

d. Status of Child Labor Practices and Minimum Age for Employment

The law prohibits the employment of persons under the age of 15. Persons between the ages of 15 and 18 may be employed only if they have completed primary school and the proposed employment constitutes vocational training and is not harmful to their health.

The State Labor Inspectorate (PIP) reported that increasing numbers of minors worked and that many employers violated labor rules by underpaying them or paying them late. Inspectors found violations in restaurants, on stud farms, and, in some instances, in small private sector businesses and factories. Sanctions for the illegal employment of children range from warning letters to orders to cease employing underage children. The police may enforce such orders by demanding the transfer of underage employees or shutting down all or part of the workplace, or, working through the Ministry of Labor, imposing fines ranging from approximately \$5 to \$125 (20 to 500 PLN) per offense. Cases may also be referred to an administrative tribunal, which can levy fines of up to \$1,250 (5,000 PLN). Jail sentences may be imposed for serious infractions; such cases generally involve serious injury or death. In 2002, the PIP conducted 1,450 investigations involving 6,890 possible underage employees. Fines were levied in 606 cases, amounting to approximately \$30,300 (121,210 PLN).

e. Acceptable Conditions of Work

The Ministry of Labor, the unions, and employers' organizations negotiate a revised national minimum wage every 3 months. The national minimum monthly wage was approximately \$200 (800 PLN); it did not provide a decent standard of living for a worker and family. A large percentage of construction workers and seasonal agricultural laborers from the former Soviet Union earned less than the minimum wage. The large size of the informal economy and the small number of state labor inspectors made enforcement of the minimum wage very difficult. With unemployment high, workers often agreed to inferior working conditions and lower pay to find or keep their jobs.

The standard legal workweek is 40 hours. The law requires overtime payment for hours in excess of the standard workweek, but there were reports that this regulation is often ignored.

The Labor Code defines minimum conditions for the protection of workers' health and safety. Provisions are strict and extensive; however, enforcement was a major problem because the PIP was unable to monitor workplaces sufficiently. In 80,494 work-related accidents reported during 2002, 520 individuals were killed and 1,037 seriously injured. During the first 6 months of the year, 232 workers were killed and 460 were seriously injured. The Government reported that while most accidents were in the public sector, most serious accidents occurred in the private sector, where proportionally more deaths also occurred. Solidarity contended that the problem lies not in the law, which establishes safe standards, but in its enforcement, because sanctions for illegal behavior by employers are minimal. Employers routinely exceeded standards for exposure to chemicals, dust, and noise. In addition, there was a lack of clarity regarding which government body had responsibility for enforcing the law. The PIP may shut down workplaces where it finds unsafe conditions. Workers may remove themselves from dangerous working conditions without losing their jobs, but there were reports that fears of employment loss prompted workers to remain on the job.

The National Unemployment Office estimated that 100,000 to 150,000 foreigners were working illegally in the country. Other estimates ranged from 250,000 to 1.5 million persons, the majority working in jobs and for wages that were unacceptable to citizens. Most illegal workers came from the former Soviet Union, Sri Lanka, and Afghanistan, although an increasingly large number were coming from Southeast Asia, particularly Vietnam. The country's relatively high wages compared to source countries and its status as an EU candidate were mainly responsible for this phenomenon.

f. Trafficking in Persons

The law prohibits trafficking in persons; however, the country was a source, transit point, and destination for trafficked persons, primarily women and girls but also, to a lesser extent, boys.

Several Criminal Code provisions specifically address trafficking. The law prohibits trafficking in persons and pimping and imposes sentences of up to 10 years on those convicted. It also prohibits recruiting or luring persons into prostitution; penalties for this offense are also up to 10 years. The most severe sentences are for individuals trafficking in children and luring women into prostitution abroad. In September, the country ratified the U.N. protocol prohibiting and punishing acts of trafficking.

Legal authorities dealt with child traffickers more severely than traffickers in adults, in part because laws on

statutory rape were easier to prosecute. As a result, the activity has been driven completely underground. Authorities did not always recognize trafficked children because traffickers used false documents identifying them as adults.

During the year, the Government sought stricter sentences and increased investigations of alleged traffickers. From April 2002 through March, police conducted 149 trafficking investigations that led to 47 arrests, 18 prosecutions, and 8 convictions and uncovered 167 trafficking victims. In January, the court sentenced 48-year old "Jerzy K." to 9 years in prison for 48 counts of criminal activity, including lying and coercing girls into prostitution, selling girls to brothels in Berlin and Belgium, and pimping. In May, a Warsaw judge sentenced three Bulgarian traffickers to 4 to 9 years in prison after a Ukrainian girl, bought and forced into prostitution, went to Warsaw police for help. The men were also charged for trafficking in two other cases, even though the females reportedly worked willingly. While child prostitution is a crime, prostitution by adults is neither prohibited nor regulated by law, making it more difficult for the police to pursue trafficking of adults.

The Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Justice have primary responsibility for anti-trafficking efforts, with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs engaged on a bilateral and multilateral level. There were 11 agencies involved in anti-trafficking efforts. The Plenipotentiary for Equal Rights for Men and Women, who works out of the Prime Minister's office, was also involved in anti-trafficking programs.

The National Police participated in several bilateral task forces that shared information, tracked the movement of traffickers and victims across borders, and coordinated repatriations and casework. Bilateral efforts include task forces with the Czech, German, and Swedish police forces. A multilateral task force coordinated anti-trafficking with Baltic state police forces.

Individuals are trafficked to and through the country, primarily from Ukraine, Bulgaria, Romania, Belarus, and Moldova. Individuals, including citizens, were trafficked to Western Europe, including Germany, Italy, Belgium, and the Netherlands. Some internal trafficking occurred. The extent of the problem is unclear, since statistics on prostitution did not distinguish trafficking victims from those willfully engaged in prostitution and other aspects of the sex trade. The international NGO La Strada estimated that 60 percent of foreign women working as prostitutes in the country were trafficking victims. NGOs believed that the trafficking problem was likely much larger than reflected in the number of arrests and prosecutions.

Ukraine was the largest single source of foreign women trafficked in the country. Women from Bulgaria tended to be from the Turkish and Romani minorities. Of the estimated 7,000 prostitutes in the country, 2,100 (30 percent) were estimated to be of foreign origin. Women and girls who were trafficked were recruited from areas with low socioeconomic conditions, sometimes quite openly. Those from the lowest socioeconomic levels were most vulnerable to trafficking and subjected to the worst conditions. For example, Roma and ethnically Turkish Bulgarians tended to be employed as prostitutes on highways, spending a few months in the country before being trafficked further west. In contrast, women from other East European countries were trafficked into agencies run as brothels. Educated Polish and Russian women were more likely than others to be employed voluntarily by escort services. One NGO reported that some adults and children were also trafficked into the country to provide illegal labor.

Traffickers attracted victims through such means as fake employment offers, arranged marriages, fraud, and coercive measures. Some victims believed that they were accepting employment as waitresses, maids, or nannies abroad. While en route to their purported destinations, traffickers took their passports and identity papers and exerted control over them through fear and intimidation. Traffickers threatened victims with violence, and those who resisted or tried to flee were raped, beaten or purposefully injured.

In recent years, trafficking has become increasingly organized and has been associated with a rampant growth in document fraud. As many as 90 percent of persons trafficked in the country had false travel documents, and the trafficking of a victim usually involved a network of criminals. One criminal would recruit the victim; a second would provide false travel documents and traffick her across the border; and a third would supervise her work with clients, functioning as a pimp. For example, police detained a Bulgarian woman on several occasions, each time with a new identity and passport.

La Strada and the police reported large-scale auctions of women in Warsaw and other cities. Prices for trafficked women and girls reportedly started at approximately \$1,500 (6,000 PLN). Victims usually were trafficked by nationals from the same source country; for example, Bulgarian women were trafficked by Bulgarians. Foreign traffickers systematically paid a percentage of their receipts to local traffickers operating out of the same region of the country.

Since the border guards and police could consider them to be liable for deportation due to violations of immigration laws, trafficking victims often were afraid to turn to officials for help. While the Government generally lacked resources to support victims financially, it cooperated extensively with NGOs, who provided a wide range of support services. The Government provided a public building to an NGO to use as a shelter for trafficking victims and gave another organization a grant to build a similar shelter. However, since the number of shelters remained inadequate, NGOs frequently resorted to ad hoc arrangements to shelter victims. The law allows foreign victims with illegal status to remain in the country during the investigation and trial of their traffickers. During the year, the Government provided full assistance to three victims who cooperated in prosecutions. NGOs and police cooperated on police sensitivity training to improve treatment of victims during investigations. The Government developed a pamphlet for police officers on treatment and resources for trafficking victims. NGOs reported improvement on the part of police officers in recognizing trafficking cases.

Nonetheless, victims were not always identified as such and, therefore, were not always informed of their legal status or rights. In many cases, such unrecognized victims were deported as soon as possible, preventing the Government from providing assistance. Some deported victims were met at the border by traffickers, who quickly provided them with new travel documents and returned them to the country. There was no specific assistance set aside for victims repatriated to Poland, although they were eligible for unemployment and welfare benefits. Poland cooperated fully with other countries in anti-trafficking efforts and the repatriation of victims.

Numerous NGOs were involved in anti-trafficking initiatives and victim services. NGOs and educational institutions often worked closely with local authorities to identify trafficking victims and develop training programs for local authorities. La Strada, the only NGO dealing exclusively with trafficking, cooperated with Caritas and other groups. These organizations provided a range of services, including victims' assistance hotlines, safe accommodation, therapy and psychological support, and contacts who could help victims with legal problems and reintegration into society. An increased number of trafficked women came forward for assistance; it was not clear if this was due to an increase in trafficking or because trafficking victims were more aware of or willing to seek assistance from NGOs and government offices that dealt with trafficking.

La Strada also provided training on prevention and victim support to professionals such as police, border guards, prosecutors, judges, social workers, teachers, and journalists. La Strada's "Guardian Angel" program, developed with the Helsinki Foundation, trained social workers to help victims with legal issues so they could be advocates for the victims before the courts, police, and prosecutors. La Strada also conducted various types of instruction on trafficking issues, including awareness training for police, training of Helsinki Foundation personnel, and seminars to university students. In November 2002, La Strada worked with the Government to coordinate an inter-ministerial roundtable to develop a national plan to combat trafficking. The Government adopted this plan in September.